

Atlantean: The Longing

Basics

Player characters are **Atlanteans**, ocean dwelling beings who are descended from the inhabitants of the long lost city of Atlantis. In the modern era, their home has become increasingly more uninhabitable due to the oceanic pollution done by ordinary humans.

They decide to bring the fight to them by coming ashore, but they can only do this at a price: the more time they spend on land, the more they become afflicted by **the Longing**, a kind of supernatural homesickness that compels them to return to the ocean. Entering artificial bodies of water (like a swimming pool) can temporarily soften the effects of the Longing, but it's just not the same thing.

If they spend too much time ignoring the Longing, they lose their powers bestowed to them by the ocean and become ordinary humans. *(Unsure about this idea: when this happens, player characters do not need to stop playing. They keep being part of the story as mortals and have a chance at regaining their powers by performing some sort of risky baptism-by-drowning ritual. Characters who've fallen out of Poseidon's favor have a different set of skills available.)*

Atlanteans are required to abide by the **Edict of Poseidon**, an ancient law proclaiming that they are not to reveal their nature to mortals. An Atlantean who was discovered by humans will be gradually forgotten if they move back into the ocean, however, if they lose their powers on the surface, Poseidon's will no longer protects them.

Character classes

The class of an Atlantean is decided by which **pelagic depth layer** they were born in.

Hadopelagic (6000m or deeper)

These Atlanteans were born in the absolute lowest depths of the ocean. They were born to withstand the highest pressures possible, which means they are the most resilient warrior class of Atlanteans. This also makes them the most acclimatized to such pressures and as such, can't spend as much time on shore as some of their peers.

Pelagic Arts: Hydrokinesis, Hydromorphosis, Cryokinesis

Archetypes: Bouncers, Bodyguards, Warriors, Brutes

Abyssopelagic (4000m to 6000m)

Abyssal Atlanteans stand in the middle of oceanic society. They act as judges and keepers of balance: higher level "sunlighters" might need some reminders where their allegiances lie, while "hadals" might have to be told that not everything is solved through war. Abyssers are also responsible for upholding the Edict of Poseidon. As far as combat ability and Longing goes, they are "all rounders".

Pelagic Arts: Hydrokinesis, Regnancy, Cryokinesis

Archetypes: Assassins, Negotiators, Peacekeepers, Judges, Lawyers

Mesopelagic (200m to 1000m)

This is the closest you can get to the surface without being spotted by humans. Atlanteans born in this pelagic zone are the least resilient, but also the most acclimated to surface conditions. They can spend the most time on surface without being compelled by it and it's very easy for them to blend in with humans.

Pelagic Arts: Regnancy, Aquapathy, Hydrokinesis

Archetypes: Party goers, socialites, tacticians, con men, infiltrators

Pelagic Arts

Atlanteans have supernatural abilities that can be sorted into groups called **Pelagic Arts**. Each class has access to different arts that best fit the nature of their given class. Since pelagic arts require players to call upon the mystical power of the ocean, using these abilities remind Atlanteans of the comforting deep and as such, they have to make rolls to resist the Longing.

The cost of performing Arts on the surface

As characters move from the ocean onto the surface, water quickly becomes a finite resource, which means that using Pelagic Arts that rely on the transformation or movement of water will be inherently limited by the amount of water available.

As such, every container of the story needs to be assigned a numerical value that expresses the amount of water it contains, and these abilities will also have a certain amount of water they remove from the container.

A few points of reference for water containers:

- Glass of water: 1 unit
- Bottle of water: 5 units
- Rainwater tank: 30 units
- Kiddie pool (sorry): 50 units
- Regular swimming pool: 70 units
- Olympic swimming pool: 100 units

Hydromorphosis

Masters of this craft are shapeshifters who have such a strong bond to the ocean that they can become liquid and solid at will, either partially or fully. They can use this ability to adapt their bodies or even to escape a situation where the odds have become stacked against them. Lower level artists can shape their arms into blades for example, while experienced Atlanteans can become sentient bodies of water and escape through the nearest drain. **Dice pool:** *Stamina + Hydromorphosis*

Needing A Hand | o

The user transforms a limb for a specific purpose, like a blade or other practical tool.

Liquid Gains | oo

The character uses a present body of water to increase their own body mass. Adds **two extra points of strength** to every relevant roll for the rest of the scene. **Cost of water:** 10 units. Longing check required.

Liquid Sentience | ooo

The character transforms entirely into water that is capable of moving on its own. Longing check required.

Invisible Threat | ooooo

The user transforms into water vapor, invisible to the untrained eye. Longing check required. Any other roll is only necessary when someone is attempting to notice this character's presence.

Hydrokinesis

Hydrokinetic Atlanteans are capable of controlling bodies of water. Low level users of this art can easily transport small bodies of water or use them as a hose to wash away their opponents, while high level artists are capable of even generating a smaller tsunami. **Dice pool:** Hydrokinesis + Dexterity

Note: with some creativity, this can be used as a form of telekinesis, as users are also capable of moving objects that contain water. The author would like to point out that all living beings contain water, which makes this a potentially dangerous and dark art form. For example, a particularly sadistic Atlantean could drain the water from a mortal's body and drown them in it.

Dry

Free power, with no cost. This is a lesser form of Dehydrate that allows the user to dry materials that are simple and inorganic, like clothes.

Shift | o

Free power. The user is capable of manipulating smaller bodies of water, including water containers, like pulling a glass or jug of water towards themselves.

Hose | oo

A larger body of water can be used as a powerful continuous projectile. **Cost of water:** 10 units per player turn. Only need to roll once. Longing check required.

Dehydrate | ooo

Water is drained from a living being, possibly fatally dehydrating them. The character performing this **can gain 25 units of water** from this at most, and only if there is a way for them to store it. Longing check required.

The Wrath of Poseidon | ooooo

The user summons a smaller tsunami, capable of wreaking havoc and causing significant collateral damage. **Cost of water:** 100 units. Longing check required.

Regnancy

Certain Atlanteans are capable of channeling the commanding presence of Poseidon in such a way that mortals will be irresistibly compelled to do their bidding. Forcing people to carry out simpler tasks is a lower level power, while exerting long term control needs experience and focus. **Dice Pool:** *Regnancy + Intelligence*. For players trying to resist these abilities: *Resolve + Unspent willpower*

Compel | o

The target will perform a simple instruction and will be under its effect for the duration of one scene. Mortals cannot resist, while non-mortals are required to make a willpower check.

Instructor | oo

The target will perform a complicated series of instructions. The effects of this power last until every instruction has been carried out. Non-mortals are required to make a willpower check.

Poisoned Resolve | ooo

The user is capable of “tainting” a fluid container in a way that each character that drinks from it will be doing their bidding for the rest of the scene. Only works on containers that contain less than 10 units of water. Has no effect on Atlanteans. User needs to touch the fluid, which might raise suspicion.

Hail To The King | ooooo

The user of this power earns such a commanding presence, that mortals in the same room automatically kneel and vow to serve them, for the duration of 3 Scenes. Non-mortals are required to make a willpower check. The character using this power is capable of releasing people from their influence.

Aquapathy

Some Atlanteans share a particularly deep connection to other creatures of the sea and are capable of communicating with them and even issuing commands to some degree. These powers can be used for simple message deliveries, or even coordinated attacks. **Dice Pool:** *Intelligence + Aquapathy*

Wildcall | o

Free. A smaller fish can be summoned and issued a simple command or a message to deliver. If the recipient is another aquapath, they will be able to effortlessly decipher the message.

Oceanic Connection | oo

The user is capable of using an aquatic animal to telepathically channel their own voice to someone else (including non-Atlanteans), allowing them to communicate regardless of telepathic ability. The two parties do not have to be underwater, but have to be near the same body of water. Longing check required.

The Silent Armada | ooooo

The user is capable of summoning an army of larger ocean animals (such as great white sharks or whales) and compel them to fight for their cause. Longing check required.

Cryokinesis

The deepest zone of the ocean is also the coldest and Atlanteans used to these parts have learned to use this temperature to their advantage. Cryokinetics are capable of creating constructs by freezing water. **Dice Pool:** *Cryokinesis + Dexterity*

Cryoequipment | o

The user creates small to medium sized equipment by freezing water. **Cost of water:** 5 units per piece. Weapons made this way add points to your combat rolls equal to your Cryokinesis level.

Ice Blaster | oo

The user throws deadly projectiles made out of ice. **Cost of water:** 1 unit per projectile. Only need to roll once. Longing check required.

Ice Shield | ooo

The user creates a shield of ice. **Cost of water:** 10 units for every person it can cover. The amount of damage an ice item can take equals to your Strength + Cryokinesis. Longing check required.

Prison Of Ice | ooooo

The user is capable of freezing a large body of water, including everything and everyone in it. **Cost of water:** 100 units. Longing check required.

Mnemonics

It's difficult to retain written information underwater. Ink dissolves quickly and while carving into stone is a decent long term storage, it still erodes over centuries and it's cumbersome to work with. Thankfully, the children of Poseidon were gifted with a special set of abilities that allows them to circumvent this problem: the art of mnemonics allows them to store thoughts and memories within objects.

Lower level users can store simple ideas for a short time, while adept performers of this art can retain a books worth of information in static materials seemingly indefinitely. Unfortunately, mnemonics comes with a disappointing limitation: damaging the object damages the stored ideas as

well. This is the reason while not much of the history of Atlantis remains. **Dice pool:** Mnemonics + Intelligence

Hold That Thought | o

Store an idea within an inanimate object for a given amount of time. People who touch that object will have an instantaneous understanding of the “notes” stored within the object. The difficulty of this roll depends on the duration of the storage and the complexity of the idea.

Remembrance | oo

Store a memory within an object in vivid detail. People who touch the object will relive the memory with eidetic detail in what seems like a fleeting moment to the outside world. The difficulty of this roll depends on the duration of the storage and the length of the memory.

Atlantean Society

At some point in history, Atlantis was the most glorious and prosperous utopia the world has ever seen (at least according to its inhabitants), but its inexplicable destruction by an earthquake has left its proud nation in complete disarray. Some believe that it was an unfortunate accident, some think it was due punishment for the ruthless conquest of Africa, while others are certain that it was a deliberate attack meant to insult Atlantis and put them at a disadvantage.

The once united citizens of Atlantis suddenly found themselves in severe disagreement over what kind of path Atlanteans should forge for themselves: some were adamant that Atlantis had to be rebuilt as it was the only way to restore the glory of Poseidon, while others believed that Atlantean society needs to interpret the catastrophe as a sign that they should move forward.

It is also worth noting that since there are very few Atlanteans who could actually remember Atlantis, many of them are not even sure that the city ever really existed and think of the Poseidon mythos propagated by their elders (depending on who tells the story, this is either a creation story or a cautionary tale). Those who do believe in Poseidon, also prophesied that if Atlanteans fail to prevent nature's destruction, Poseidon will die and bring upon an Eternal Drought.

In modern times, the descendants of Poseidon are faced with a new issue: humans have begun polluting their natural habitat in increasingly destructive ways, which puts not only the future of Atlanteans at risk, but the future of all marine life. This problem has united remaining Atlanteans

to a certain degree, but discussions on how to solve it have divided them yet again, this time in a different way.

Mars Pacifer

Mars Pacifer was formed by a group of Atlanteans who decided to take a more sophisticated and measured approach to halting the destruction of ocean and sea habitats. Named after the peace offering variant of Ares, the Greek god of war, they think of themselves as diplomats, who are willing to take arms only when all else fails and even then, they prefer to solve problems without unnecessarily taking lives.

As such, Pacifers began to lean towards a more strategic approach when it comes to warfare: infiltration, espionage, information warfare, smear campaigns and sabotage are all on the table and even if they resort to using force, they prefer relying on tactics and team work, rather than brute force.

Devon Karalis

De facto leader of Mars Pacifer and shrewd businessman. Underwater, he oversees and plans most sabotage operations of the group, while on the surface, he is the executive of a large green energy company. A gifted politician and strategist, while also an influential socialite.

As a byproduct of his profession and heritage, Devon is also a master manipulator, which makes many of his fellow Pacifers distrustful towards him. One particularly vile rumour is that unlike Amyntas, Devon was not chosen to be a leader by his peers, but took over Mars Pacifer through a transition of power that was anything, but peaceful.

Maria Melpomene

While a core member of Mars Pacifer, Maria definitely doesn't want to be as high profile as some of the other members in the group. In her civilian life, she is a DJ and a singer, mostly performing in underground clubs and beach parties and has no aspirations of ever hitting the mainstream.

She personally believes that Devon spends way too much time in the spotlight and leading an energy company makes him the prime suspect in every mysterious attack on competitors, which will become a serious risk to the Edict.

The Hand of Poseidon

Members of The Hand of Poseidon (or The Hand for short) believe that humans were not all that worthy of anything in the first place and “thinning the herd” in the name of a noble purpose is not a huge sacrifice. They are completely willing to kill everyone who ever had a hand in destroying nature and some of them even go as far as envisioning a future where ordinary humans are extinct.

Those allied with The Hand generally think of themselves as true Atlantean warriors, whereas Mars Pacifers are just a bunch of cowards, unworthy of Poseidon’s gifts and protection.

Amyntas

Leader and oldest member of The Hand. As a devoted believer of the Poseidon myth and the classic, heroic values of Atlantis, he is unwilling to adopt a modern mortal name and only spends time on the surface when it is absolutely necessary.

Being absolutely cold and ruthless when up against his mortal enemies (or at least those he perceives as such) gave him a somewhat tyrannical reputation, but many of his critics don’t know that he is genuinely caring and compassionate towards his own people and believes that he is acting in *their* best interest, and no one else’s.

Lykos

The first son of Amyntas, who probably couldn’t be any further from his father. Since he is not carrying the centuries old grudges of his predecessors, Lykos is much more merciful and compassionate towards the mortals of modern times and if possible, prefers scaring them instead of senselessly murdering everyone.

When it comes to combat, he also has different preferences to his father: instead of brute force, he is a clever tactician, which interestingly makes him a more challenging opponent to Devon Karalis.

Lykos is also more willing to socialize on the surface, but to avoid suspicion, he introduces himself as “Lake” when talking to mortals.

Post-Atlantean Senate

Shortly after Atlantis was destroyed, it's survivors found it impossible to agree on how to continue, and this short era of confusion and internal strife eventually led to an armed conflict called The Vortex Of Emotions.

After losing numerous lives to the conflict, remaining Atlanteans decided that they needed a battlefield that allowed them to wage war with words instead of weapons. Since Atlantis existed during the Ancient era, the birthplace of democracy, they decided to use the most advanced form of government that existed at the time and went on to form the Post-Atlantean Senate. In modern times, the Senate is primarily focused on upholding the Edict of Poseidon, but it's members are still called upon to make decisions when they feel that Atlanteans are arriving at critical forks in the political road to survival.

Playing The Game

Storytelling, turns and actions

A game of ATL is driven by a Storyteller, someone who is responsible for setting up a scenario and guiding players through it by challenging their decisions and explaining the consequences of their actions.

Every story is separated into a basic unit of time called a **Scene**: a series of actions that happen in the same location and feature roughly the same set of characters. Scenes are important, as several abilities are constrained by this measurement.

In every scene, players take turns to perform actions and the story moves forward based on how successful they were.

Skill checks

When a player indicates that they want to perform an action, the Storyteller might require them to perform a **skill check**: this generally involves a dice roll that combines the ability of their character, the difficulty of the task and some good old fashioned luck. The formula for a successful check is the following:

Your relevant attributes + your relevant equipment modifiers + your roll on a 20-sided dice > the action's Difficulty Level

The attributes relevant to any given action will be picked by the storyteller. To determine how successful you were in taking an action, you will have to subtract the difficulty from your roll, the resulting number is called a **roll margin**. The higher your roll margin is, the more successful you are. There are two special rolls: if you roll 20 on your 20-sided dice, it's a **critical success**, regardless of what the difficulty was. Spending one point of **Willpower** allows you a complete reroll. *See the table below for reference Difficulty Levels.*

When you are using a **pelagic art**, you will need an additional 10-sided dice for certain rolls. If your roll on this dice is higher than your character's Longing Resistance, your Longing will increase by one.

7	Really easy. Beating mortals in combat, doing simple pelagic feats.
10	Some difficulty. Armed combat against mortals, kicking down a locked door.
12	Average difficulty.
15	Considerably challenging. Dodging projectile weapons
17+	Nigh impossible.

Combat

In combat, actions are performed the same way, however, there are some additional rules that help govern the conflict and decide it's outcome. Generally, the first one to attack is the character that initiated combat according to the story.

In an attack maneuver, you perform a roll similarly to any other skill check, but your opponent also gets to roll using their relevant defensive attributes and modifiers, this is called a **contest**. If the roll margin is positive in the attacker's favor, the attack will damage their opponent equal to the margin. In any other case, the offensive fails.

Managing your Longing

Longing is one of the primary problems that plagues every Atlantean: as people born into the ocean, all of them feel an increasingly severe and mystical homesickness that compels them to go back to their natural habitat.

In the game this problem manifests itself in two numbers on your character sheet: your **Longing** and your **Longing Resistance**. Each time you fail a Longing check (detailed above) your Longing increases by one. Being in a large artificial body of water decreases this value by 2.

*Note: to Atlanteans, **distilled water** is repulsive to an insulting degree. While they are educated enough to understand it's scientific value, coming into contact with it increases Longing by 1 and being submerged in it, increases it by 2.*

When your Longing reaches 10, your character becomes **homesick**: in game terms, this means that every action you take needs to be directed towards reaching a sufficient body of water, else you have to subtract 3 from every roll you perform.

Death

While atlanteans generally live for hundreds of years, they are not completely impervious to physical harm.

When your character's **Health** reaches zero, there are two possible outcomes. If you have no companions, your character dies. If you play as part of a **Shiver** (the name for a collaborating group of Atlanteans), they can revive you if they move you into a natural body of water within the next 3 Scenes.

Improvement

The Storyteller is free to distribute any amount of points as rewards for accomplishments.

Creating Characters

Pick an empty sheet of paper or just open a text editor and add the following basic counters:

- **Health: 10**
- **Longing: 0** (with a maximum of 10)
- **Longing Resistance:** depends on your class
 - **Hadopelagic: 4**
 - **Abyssopelagic: 5**
 - **Mesopelagic: 6**
- **Willpower: 5** (resets by descending back into the ocean)

For your **Attributes**: take the following list and add 4 points to one attribute, 3 points to three attributes, 2 points to four attributes, and 1 point to one attribute.

Strength	Charisma	Intelligence
Dexterity	Manipulation	Wits
Stamina	Composure	Resolve

For **Skills**, take the following list and add 3 points to one skill, 2 points to eight skills, and 1 points to ten skills

Athletics	Animal Ken	Academics
Brawl	Etiquette	Awareness
Craft	Insight	Finance
Drive	Intimidation	Investigation
Firearms	Leadership	Medicine
Larceny	Performance	Occult
Melee	Persuasion	Politics
Stealth	Streetwise	Science
Survival	Subterfuge	Technology

For **Pelagic Arts**, pick two out of the three associated with your class and distribute 3 points between them.

Storytelling And Themes

Regardless of your stance on Atlantean politics or methodology, *Atlantean: The Longing* is a game of perpetual war and the recognition that there are just many reasons to declare war as there are ways to actually wage it.

The Children of Poseidon had various disagreements for hundreds of years, both regarding the past and the future of Atlantis, which means that there are many opportunities and themes that can be used as a backdrop for their stories.

In any case, one thing is certain: just like their divine ancestor, Atlanteans are generally people of strong convictions, unwavering determination and pride. Whatever the conflict they be, they will be willing to fight for what they believe in.

Eco-terrorism

It is clear, that the most pressing issue for modern Atlanteans is that their natural habitats are constantly in danger due to human activity. Every Atlantean completely agrees that something needs to be done about this, but there are different opinions on how to fight the problem, which means that there is a lot of room for storytelling.

Maybe your players are a group from Mars Pacifer, who insist on waging a “cold war” against humanity to suppress those who are behind the destruction of their home: to do this, they could probably slip into a fancy dinner party and plan an elaborate sabotage or collect intel for information warfare. A more ruthless group could go even further and infiltrate a human establishment to carry out the assassination of an influential opponent with surgical precision.

Of course, not every offensive has to be quiet: your players could join The Hand Of Poseidon and strike humanity where it hurts the most. Plan coordinated attacks to destroy oil tankers and rigs, pretend to be pirates who take over cargo ships. Do you want to demonstrate strength by killing everyone onboard or do you just want to scar them for a lifetime? Your call! Formidable opponents in such a story would probably be shrewd army officers, clever sea captains or even other Atlanteans who want to prevent a massacre and keep the Edict of Poseidon intact.

The Past of Atlantis

Many hundreds of years have passed since the glorious city of Atlantis was destroyed by an earthquake of uncertain origin. No one is really sure why the Children of Poseidon had to suffer this way and even in modern times, there are Atlanteans hell bent on finding the truth.

It is possible, that your players want to lead an expedition to it's supposed location. What are they going to do? Maybe they could ask around for local myths and legends, sneak and talk their way into a local museum to dig up ancient texts and relics or just dive headfirst into the water and start looking for clues.

Too easy? It is possible that members of Mars Pacifer and The Hand could join forces for such a venture, but there is no way of telling what the two sides are going to do when they actually get there. When they find out a horrible truth, how are they going to react? The Hand ferociously believes in the myth of Poseidon, while Pacifer is more on the side of modern rationality and finding out the truth could fundamentally change how these factions perceive their world.

The Future of Atlantis

Even though the city of Atlantis is long lost to tragedy, many Atlanteans are certain that there is still hope to restore it's glory in one way or another. Some think that Atlantis is more about the ideals and values it represents, while others think that only a towering city can become a worthy monument to the power of Poseidon.

You could have a group of players who decide that they want to gain formal legitimacy in the world and work towards a political alliance with humanity, of course, this would require them to challenge a tradition older than they are: the Edict of Poseidon. Can they convince Atlanteans to join their cause? How would they handle the world's reaction to their existence?

Maybe your Atlanteans are different and they are certain that the glory of Atlantis can only be restored the same way it was built the first time: with blood and steel. Are your players skilled enough to lead an army of Atlanteans (who are vastly outnumbered) and earn your place on the surface through conquest?

It is possible that instead of predicting the future of Atlantis, your players have to save it: what if they discovered that there is a traitor among their ranks (it could even be one of the players!) and they have to descend neck deep into a web of intrigue to prevent their plot.

Survival

Not every Atlantean wants to partake in war or acts of terrorism. There are Children of Poseidon who are perfectly fine just living their lives among humans, but many of them risk becoming ostracized by doing so, which means that even they cannot live free of potential conflict. Every neutral Atlantean could become an enemy by merely denying to fight for the righteous cause of Atlantis or by being complicit to others who've lost the favor of Poseidon.

Imagine a group of characters, who spend their days just getting by, perhaps by owning a bar on the beach or teaching kids how to surf. One day, they are approached by a rough looking man, who offers an ultimatum: fight for the cause or die. Do they run? Do they join the cause "just for one job"?

Or another scenario could be that your players stumble upon a house inhabited by a Stranded Shiver: a group of Atlanteans who have lost their powers and are trying to survive. Since their mere existence could be a threat to the Edict, your players need to make a tough decision? Do they protect them and possibly become targets themselves? Do you bring them to justice?